

Committee on Government Reform



MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
November 12, 2003

Contact: David Marin (Davis) (202) 225-5074
Larry Halloran (Shays) (202) 225-2548

Davis, Shays to Announce Progress in Fixing Pay Problems Plaguing Army National Guard Units

Lawmakers to Release GAO Report, Hear From Guardsman

What: Press Conference with **Rep. Tom Davis** (R-VA), Chairman, Committee on Government Reform; and **Rep. Christopher Shays** (R-CT), Vice Chairman, Committee on Government Reform and Chairman, Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, to discuss status of pay problems plaguing Army National Guard units, and to release GAO report on the issue.

Gregory Kutz, Director, Financial Management and Assurance, GAO

SFC Curtis Dunn, Virginia's B Company, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces (Dunn's Special Forces unit experienced the pay problems described in the GAO report. In his efforts to get the problems fixed, Dunn learned firsthand about the error-prone mobilization and demobilization systems DoD has pledged to improve.)

When: Thursday, November 13, 2003, 10 a.m.

Where: Room 2003, Rayburn House Office Building

Background:

At the press conference, Chairmen Davis and Shays will release a U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report entitled, *Military Pay: Army National Guard Personnel Mobilized to Active Duty Experienced Significant Pay Problems* (GAO-04-89). Davis and Shays will commend the Department of Defense's proactive response to the GAO findings and request sustained, high-level attention to completion of the report's recommended corrective actions.

Because pay errors can have devastating emotional and financial impacts on deployed soldiers and their families, the lawmakers have been urging the Department to remedy

errors and delays in Guard pay processes. Thanks to their oversight, the Department has already made substantial efforts to resolve the pay and allowance errors for the individual Army National Guard (ANG) units identified in the GAO report.

But Davis and Shays still question whether the Department is prepared to undertake all the steps necessary to determine the full scope of the problem and pursue effective short and long term solutions with the same sense of urgency with which the citizen-soldiers in the ANG pursue their missions.

The Government Reform Committee remains concerned that many soldiers and their families over the last 12 months were required to spend considerable time seeking corrections to active pay and allowances amounts, sometimes while the soldiers were deployed in remote, hostile environments overseas.

In recent months, Committee staff has discussed these issues with the Department of the Army, the Army National Guard Bureau, and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). These agencies have provided a corrective action plan and assurances that concrete steps are being taken to correct these problems and implement the GAO recommendations.

However, because of the magnitude of the problem and the lawmakers' skepticism that systemic military pay and allowance problems can be resolved quickly, Davis and Shays – in a November 10 letter to Secretary Rumsfeld -- have asked the Office of the Secretary of Defense to take a proactive role in monitoring the corrective action plan. Specifically, they are requesting DOD provide the Committee with periodic updates on the status of the plan.

###